



TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT MANUFACTURERS' COLLABORATIVE
to

HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

February 5, 2019

The Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative (CMC) appreciates this opportunity to provide testimony related to four bills listed on today's public hearing agenda:

- **Proposed H.B. No. 5001** AN ACT ENSURING THAT STUDENTS IN THIS STATE RECEIVE HIGH-QUALITY SKILLS TRAINING.
- **Proposed H.B. No. 5833** AN ACT EXPANDING ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AT REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGES.
- **S.B. No. 799 (RAISED)** AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.
- **H.B. No. 7027 (RAISED)** AN ACT CONCERNING MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY.

The CMC is comprised of all the major regional and statewide manufacturing organizations across Connecticut.¹ We represent over 1200 manufacturing companies with tens of thousands of employees throughout Connecticut.

Throughout the fall of 2018, the CMC held several strategic planning sessions to define the broad challenges facing manufacturing in Connecticut and provide recommendations for addressing those challenges. Most importantly, and for the first time, these challenges and recommendations are presented to you through a single, unified collaboration of Connecticut manufacturers – those who face these challenges every day, and know, first-hand, what needs to be done to effectively address them.

We have attached to this testimony, for your consideration, both the policy recommendations and specific legislative language the CMC is requesting this committee, and the General Assembly to consider.

With respect to higher education and the subject matter of the four bills referenced above, Connecticut continues to suffer from a lack of a coordinated, collaboratively developed strategic thinking among dozens of state and regional agencies, quasi-publics organizations, non-profit and private institutions. This challenge applies to a broad spectrum of education-related issues from curriculum development and teacher shortages, to educational access and technology development and deployment.

¹ Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM), Connecticut Business and Industry Association and its affiliate (CBIA/CONNSTEP), Connecticut Tooling and Machining Association (CTMA), Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Association (EAMA), Manufacturing Education and Training Alliance (METAL), New England Spring and Metalstamping Association (NESMA), New Haven Manufacturing Association (NHMA), Smaller Manufacturers Association (SMA)

SB-799 and HB-7027, specifically call upon the State Board of Regents to conduct studies on these matters. We respectfully offer a different approach.

It is the opinion of Connecticut's manufacturing community that the current construct of vested, well-intentioned stakeholder silos, will never be able to coordinate and collaborate to the degree necessary to meet the manufacturing workforce, technology and other challenges - without the creation of a single individual within state government to "own" manufacturing and be empowered, responsible and accountable for bringing all the stakeholders together in a unified, strategic process to ensure manufacturing realizes its full potential to drive employment, economic growth, middle-class prosperity and fiscal stability in Connecticut.

That is why, our proposal to create a Secretary of Manufacturing in Connecticut should, in our view, be your highest priority for moving manufacturing forward.

Our attached proposals include legislative language for creating such a secretary-level position. Our proposal includes recommended qualifications, responsibilities, priorities and even a proposed funding source. To be clear, this is not a call for a new government agency. Our vision is a single individual with a single staff assistant.

Several of our other proposals reflect our experience of observing boards, commissions, task forces, advisory committees and other entities formed to work on manufacturing issues, that lack meaning participation from, or outreach to manufacturers themselves – especially smaller and mid-sized manufacturers. Well-intended initiatives come at us one after another, too often designed to address problems not well-defined, with solutions that don't meet our needs.

With the creation of the CMC, we look forward to a new paradigm of public-private collaboration among government and other entities involved in manufacturing issues. But it is our strong and broadly-held position that without a manufacturing Secretary, strongly supported by the governor and the General Assembly, Connecticut will continue to approach these challenges through siloed initiatives with no overall strategic coordination, and with outcomes that hold no prospect of delivering solutions at the scale necessary to meet the manufacturing challenges of today, let alone those in the years to come.

CMC appreciates this opportunity to share our perspectives with you. We look forward to serving as a resource for your committee and working with you and other legislators and the governor to achieve unprecedented success in advancing Connecticut manufacturing. We can be reached directly at 860-244-1926 or through our lobbyist, Melissa Biggs at melissa@dnblobby.com